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Clinical Center News

Nutrition Department Sponsors Holiday Buffet for Patients

During the holidays, we try to make Clinical Center patients a bit more comfortable. This year, the Nutrition Department put its talents to work. On Dec. 10, they held a holiday buffet for about 65 patients from the mental health and alcohol units—complete with sumptuous food and drink, Santa and Mrs. Claus, and gifts for all.

The 14th floor assembly hall, site of the first Nutrition Department-sponsored holiday buffet, was decorated with red, green, and white dangling

snowflakes, Christmas trees, forest-green wreaths, and colorful trinkets. The biggest attraction was the seven-course buffet, served by smiling Nutrition Department administrators and food service staff. Prime rib, glazed ham, and apple/lemon-glazed cornish game hens dominated the buffet, but candied sweet potatoes, oven-roast potatoes, rice pilaf, broccoli almonidine, stir-fry vegetables, and Mexican corn offered still more choices. And as if that were not enough, delicious pumpkin

muffins and twist rolls, homemade pecan pie, yule logs, and Christmas cookies, and sparkling cider tempted even the most resistant among us.

“All the patients are on special low monoamine diets,” explained Denise Ford, clinical nutrition specialist. “We had to be very creative in making the food. One of our employees, a former pastry chef, made special pecan pies, yule logs, and Christmas cookies, taking dietary restrictions into consideration.” This required

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CC Exceeds CFC Participation Goals

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is officially over, and the Clinical Center exceeded last year's participation levels. The participation rate increased this year by 16 percent, meaning that 62 percent of Clinical Center employees contributed at least a small amount. In addition, the Clinical Center raised over \$98,000, an increase of \$19,000 over last year.

Clinical Center Executive Officer Raymond Becich says,

“Thank you to all the Clinical Center people who participated and especially to CFC coordinators Dr. Adrienne Farrar, Lorrie Maciag, and the CFC key workers for their hard work.”

Four CFC key workers, whose names were picked at random last month, won \$50 each in four categories for the CFC key workers raffle: Dr. Jim Sayers, Social Work Department, won in the 100 percent participation category, Carrie Prince, Materials

Management Department, won in the over \$50 contribution category, Michelle George, Clinical Pathology Department, won in the \$50 and less contribution category, and Paula Buford, Housekeeping and Fabric Care Department, won among those who gave \$26 or more. ■



Crestar Bank, located on the B-2 level of the Clinical Center, raised over \$1000 for the Patient Emergency Fund (PEF) this holiday season. To raise money, they provided a notary service for Clinical Center employees throughout the year. Rae Noyes, Crestar customer service representative (left), and Joyce Grimm, Crestar branch manager (right), present a check for \$1,160 to the PEF in care of Dr. James Sayers, Social Work Department chief (center). ■

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substitutions for ingredients such as chocolate and dairy products.

Patients feasted, mingled, and enjoyed themselves, as a pianist played holiday music and sang holiday songs. Although the food was a big hit, the real fun came toward the end of the event. Santa and Mrs. Claus stormed the room, armed with gifts for everyone. In the end, the food outlasted the patients, and only the Nutrition Department was left to clear the residuals.

Nutrition Department staff prepared for six months to host the

holiday buffet. Alberta Bourn, chief of the Nutrition Department, said she got the idea for the holiday buffet last year, when nutrition employees created a buffet for an employee awards banquet. "I decided it would be wonderful if we could do that for patients. Maybe we can do buffets throughout the year, with different themes," she suggested. ■

Correction: Alberta Bourn should have been identified as Chief of the Nutrition Department in last month's *On The QT* Column.

Research Volunteers Needed

The Laboratory of Neurosciences at the National Institute on Aging is seeking healthy volunteers to participate in a study investigating the effects of aging on brain functions.

Volunteers must be in excellent health, medication free, and without past or present major health problems. Men above the age of 60 are particularly needed. Procedures require approximately 13 hours, and participants can receive a stipend of up to \$300, depending on the actual time involved. For more information, call 496-4754, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ■

CC News

Editor: Karen D. Riedel

Clinical Center News is published monthly by the Office of Clinical Center Communications, Colleen Henrichsen, Chief, for employees of the Clinical Center, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

News, article ideas, calendar events, letters and photographs are encouraged and can be submitted to Bldg. 10 room 1C255 or by calling 496-2563.

Deadline for submission is the second Monday of each month.

PET's Pet Project

By Sue Kendall

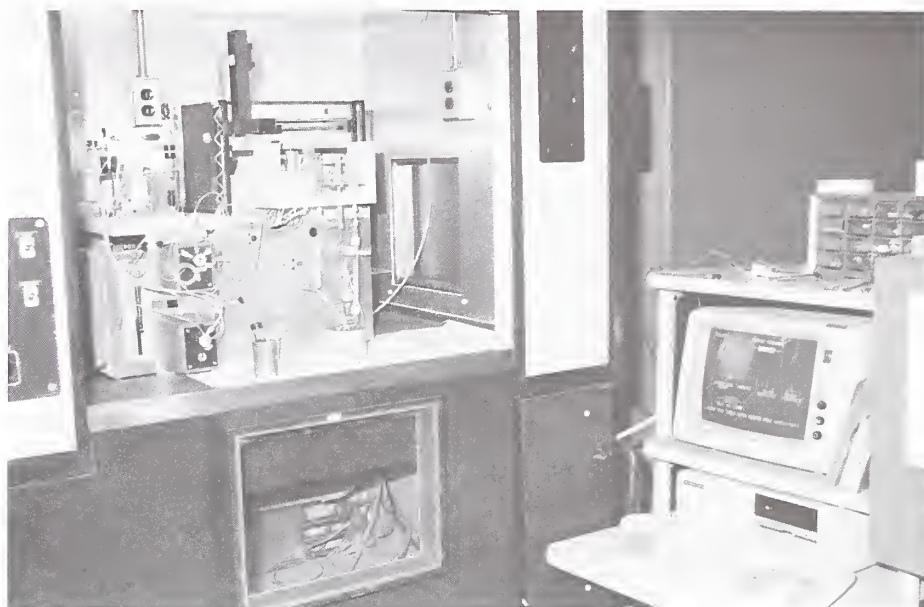
The Positron Emission Tomography (PET) department has developed a novel automated method of producing radioactive pharmaceuticals. This technique reduces exposure to technicians, increases pharmaceutical output, speeds up scanning of patients, and is more reliable than the former process.

"Other facilities that use PET are trying to automate, but we're using our system right now," says Norman Simpson, head of the production team.

In 1987, the PET department was faced with an ever-increasing demand for short-lived radiolabeled pharmaceuticals, and commercially available systems had several drawbacks: they weren't fully automated; they were designed to work with too-large quantities; or they weren't developed for radioactive materials. Simpson and Michael Channing, Ph.D, set out to develop an efficient, safe, and reliable automated method of formulating the compounds. The result of their labors is a computer-controlled system of valves, tubes, vials, and pipettes, manipulated by a mechanical arm and shielded by a 2-inch-thick lead wall.

The new system currently produces one pharmaceutical, [^{18}F]fluoro-2-deoxy-D-glucose, commonly used in studies of glucose metabolism. The goal is to synthesize all compounds automatically.

"We've been testing this prototype since January 1991, and it has proved its worth," says Simpson. He has a second unit on



A computer, (right) directs the mechanical arm (vertical black bar at top of apparatus) to perform a complex series of steps in synthesis of the compound. Windowed panel (bottom center) slides up to prevent radiation leakage while synthesis is in process.

the workbench, almost ready for service. "The automated system takes a little longer than the manual system, but the end product is chemically purer and much more reliable," he says. This reliability allows researchers to ready their patients for a PET scan while the automated system performs its alchemy, knowing that a consistently high-quality product will soon arrive, he says. Patients don't wait as long, and the study data are more precise. Simpson points out that timely administration is another advantage to having on-site synthesis.

Most radiopharmaceuticals used in PET scanning have short half-lives (the time it takes half the atoms to decay), which ensures their safe use in humans. The radiation such a compound expends enables the investigator to trace its progress through the body by PET imaging, which provides crucial information about organ

function and metabolism.

The new system works like this: A stream of the radioactive isotope, generated by one of the Clinical Center's two cyclotrons, is turned on manually; then the computer takes charge, directing the intricate chemical process of mixing the isotope with a substance such as glucose. Eighty minutes later, a 300-millicurie [a millicurie is a unit of radioactivity] batch is ready to be safely injected into the day's patients. The previous, semi-automated system rendered only 80 millicuries and required a technician to perform certain steps manually, risking radiation exposure and human error.

The PET department is working closely with NIH researchers and chemists to apply this technology to new pharmaceuticals. Simpson optimistically sums up, "If we can't find a machine to do what we want, we'll make one." ■

Crime Watch

By Ellyn Pollack

One weekend afternoon, Barbara (not her real name) walked into the nurses' lounge and saw a man she did not recognize. Since he was wearing a lab coat and stethoscope, she was not alarmed by his presence. She said hello, and he responded. But as soon as he left the room, she noticed that her co-worker's purse was sitting open on the sofa.

With suspicion aroused, Barbara immediately went to find her co-worker and ask if she knew the man who had been in the lounge. She told Barbara she did not recognize him. She said she had left her purse in the lounge, but not open.

Barbara called the NIH police and provided a detailed description of the man. Within 15 minutes, the police spotted the suspect in another unit.

"When we tried to identify the suspect, he had old identification that was fraudulent, taped together,

and stapled," recalls Brad Fitzgerald, one of the arresting officers. "We could not make a positive ID."

The suspect was taken to the NIH police station and charged with theft of the lab coat and stethoscope. Nothing had been taken from the nurse's purse; her wallet was in her locker at the time.

Citizen—or, in this case, employee—participation is essential in fighting crime, according to O.W. Jim Sweat, director of the Division of Security Operations.

"For years, police departments nationwide have recognized that the suppression of crime is dependent on citizen cooperation. Studies show that where there is active collaboration with police, crime is suppressed. Without citizen cooperation, crime rates tend to increase dramatically," says Sweat.

Despite employee cooperation, personal theft is a problem at the Clinical Center, according to Fitzgerald, especially theft of women's wallets. People wander

into empty offices and start looking through unlocked drawers and file cabinets to find cash, checks, and credit cards.

"Anyone noticing a suspicious person should call the NIH police with a detailed description of the suspect," Fitzgerald emphasizes. "A suspicious person would be someone wandering around who does not have any business in your work area, especially someone lurking behind closed doors."

Barbara says she has become more conscious of who is walking around her unit. Just before the incident, Barbara was working on another unit where the head nurse asked people she did not recognize for identification. It was her way of deterring theft.

Employees should lock up all valuables and remind patients to do the same. When employees notice a suspicious person, they should call the NIH police with a detailed description. Employees should not attempt to apprehend any suspects. Just call the police at 496-5685 or for an emergency, dial 115. ■

January Calendar of Events

8 Grand Rounds
12 noon-1 p.m. Lipsett Amphitheater. *The Phospholipid Antibody Syndrome*, Michael Lockshin, M.D., NIAMS. *Understanding Gaucher Disease*, Edward Ginns, M.D., Ph.D., NIMH.

15 Grand Rounds
12 noon-1 p.m. Lipsett Amphitheater. *What is the Function of T Cells That Express the $\gamma\delta$ T-Cell Receptor?* Ethan Shevach, M.D., Ph.D., NIAID. *Impact of MRI on Management and Research in Multiple Sclerosis*, Henry McFarland, M.D., and Dale McFarlin, M.D., NINDS.

17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Program
11:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m., Masur Auditorium.

22 Grand Rounds
12 noon-1 p.m. Lipsett Amphitheater. *Down Syndrome: Differentiating Dementia and Mental Retardation*, Mark Schapiro, M.D., NIA. *AIDS in Children: A Now and Future Problem*, Dr. Philip Pizzo, M.D., NCI.

22 NIH Lecture
3 p.m., Masur Auditorium. *Molecular Analysis of Resistance to Anti-Cancer*, Michael M. Gottesman, M.D., NCI.

24 NIH Consensus Development Conference
Diagnosis and Treatment of Early Melanoma.
25 Contact Marla Hollander at (301) 468-6555 for more information.

29 Clinical Staff Conference
12 noon-1:30 p.m. Lipsett Amphitheater. *High Density Lipoproteins: New Insights into Structure, Function, Metabolism, and Role in Premature Cardiovascular Disease*, H. Bryan Brewer, M.D., NHLBI, Moderator.